**Wrestling…Man’s Oldest Sport**

***“Once you’ve wrestled, everything else in life is easy.”***

***Dan Gable… America’s most honored wrestler and wrestling coach***

Wrestling has been popular throughout recorded history. Origins of the sport can be traced back 15,000 years to cave drawings in ancient Europe. Early Egyptian and Babylonian drawings depict wrestlers using most of the holds known to the present-day sport. Wrestling can also be considered the holiest of sports since it is the only sport mentioned in the Bible. The Aramaic name Israel means “to wrestle with God.” In ancient Greece, wrestling occupied a prominent place in legend and literature. Wrestling competition was the supreme contest of the ancient Olympic Games. The Romans borrowed heavily from Greek wrestling, but eliminated much of its brutality. During these times, champion wrestlers were treated as hero’s and became legends of their times. Modern Olympics include both **freestyle** and **Greco-Roman** styles of wrestling.

Early American settlers brought a strong wrestling tradition with them from England. The colonists also found wrestling quite popular among the Native Americans. Amateur wrestling flourished throughout the early years of the nation, and served as a popular activity at country fairs, holiday celebrations, and in military exercises. Of the early American styles, only the ‘catch-as-catch-can’ style survived, and it has evolved into the modern form of collegiate wrestling, also known as **folkstyle**.

Today, **folkstyle** wrestling is attracting many more competitors at the elementary and high school levels. As MMA becomes more popular, children are finding the desire to become familiar with this unique and most respected form of martial arts. More adults are making wrestling part of their lifestyle as a way to have fun while combating heart disease. Girls in particular are becoming more active in the realm of wrestling as it is now a female scholarship sport at some universities as well as an Olympic sport featuring five different weight classes.

Overview of Wrestling Rules

The ultimate objective of the sport of wrestling is to put your opponent on his back and pin your opponent.

A pin (or fall) is when you put your opponent on his/her back with any part of both shoulders or both shoulder blades of your opponent in contact with the mat for two seconds. When you pin your opponent, the match is over and you are the winner.

If nobody gets pinned, the winner is the wrestler who has scored the most points during the match.

**There are five ways to score points in a wrestling match:**

**A. Neutral Position - on your feet**

* **1) Takedown** - (2 points) From the **neutral** position, you score two points for taking your opponent down to the mat and controlling him/her.

**B**. **Referee’s Position – down on the mat**

* **2) Escape** - (1 point) You score one point for getting away or getting to a neutral position when your opponent has you down on the mat.
* **3) Reversal** - (2 points) You score two points when your opponent has you down on the mat and you come from underneath and gain control of your opponent.
* **4) Near Fall or Back Points** - (2 or 3 points) You get near fall points when you almost but not quite get your opponent pinned. A near fall (or near pin) is when the shoulders of the bottom wrestler are exposed to the mat but not both touching the mat at the same time.
* you get 2 points for exposing both shoulders to the mat for two to four seconds
* you get 3 points if a near fall lasts for 5 seconds or longer

**5) Penalty Points** - (1 or 2 points) Your opponent is awarded points if you commit illegal holds (i.e. locking hands, choking, unnecessary roughness, etc.).

